

MUSIC REVIEW

Fans Jam Forum for Elvis

BY ROBERT HILBURN

Times Pop Music Critic

In his first local performances in 13 years, Elvis Presley's two Saturday concerts at the Forum in Inglewood shattered the one-day box office record at the arena and demonstrated once again the dynamic qualities that have made him the nation's top concert attraction.

The \$313,000 gross from the concerts, sponsored by Management III in association with Concert Associates and Concerts West easily broke the previous single day record of \$238,000 set last year by the Rolling Stones' two concerts.

Backed by the same supporting acts (the Imperials and the Sweet Inspirations vocal quartets plus comedian Sammy Shore) that have been with him in Las Vegas, Presley's Saturday concerts were similar in design but different in results.

Both his timing and showmanship seemed better in the afternoon. By the middle of the evening concert, he seemed tired. His movements--the widely imitated karate-like gestures, the sweeping turns, the occasional hip wiggles — were less pronounced in the evening show.

It was a widely divergent audience, a cross between what one would find at an adult, middle America, dominated Tom Jones concert and a younger typical rock concert. It was an audience of worshippers and curious, long hair and short hair, old fans (now in the 25-35 age group) and new ones.

The first show started 15 minutes after the scheduled 3 p.m. time. After an hour of preliminaries and intermis-

Please Turn to Pg. 19, Col. 4

PRESLEY IS BACK

Continued from First Page
sion, the audience anticipation was at peak. Nine uniformed security guards plus Cpl. Tom Parker, Presley's manager, and Jerry Weintraub, who is promoting the eight city tour, sat on benches in front of the stage to guard against overzealous fans. But no incidents developed.

At 4:15, the lights dim. As guitarist James Burton hits the opening licks of "That's All Right (Mama)," Presley walks on stage. He's wearing a white Apache-style jump suit with a red rope/belt around his waist. Hundreds of flashbulbs illuminate the Forum. "I love you Elvis," a woman screams from the audience. Others screech or shout similar loyalties. The flashbulbs are so bright he has to blink repeatedly.

"Hello, I'm Johnny Cash," he tells the audience, engaging in the tongue-in-cheek actions that he enjoys on stage. He alters one of the lines in "Love Me Tender" as a gag, moves right into "You Don't Have to Say You Love Me" and then "You've Lost That Loving Feeling," going through all sorts of turns and sweeps for dramatic effect. Flashbulbs pop again.

After a strenuous rendi-

tion of "Polk Salad Annie," he falls to the floor, stays there for several seconds in mock exhaustion, then gets up with a smile on his face. After "Johnny B. Goode," he introduces guitarist Burton as Chuck Berry and pianist Glen D. Hardin as Jerry Lee Lewis.

Presley then went through some of his early recordings ("Heartbreak Hotel," "Blue Suede Shoes," "Hound Dog" and the gospel "How Great Thou Art") before moving into "Bridge Over Troubled Water," "Suspicious Minds," Willie Nelson's "Funny How Time Slips Away" and, finally, "Can't Help Falling in Love." As always he didn't do an encore. He was on stage for 50 minutes.

In the evening show, Presley changed to a jump suit with long fringes along the sleeves. His selections were the same, except that he added "One Night," "Love Me" and "Trying to Get to You."

Because the evening concert was sold out in less than 10 hours, Presley felt a special closeness to the evening audience. Perhaps that is why he engaged in such uncharac-

teristic—for him—actions as taking time to deny certain (unspecified, but obvious to the audience) stories that had been printed recently about his private life and to remind the audience (in a sense, I think, of thanking it for its loyalty) of how many records he has sold and to say that his new movie, an MGM documentary on his last Las Vegas engagement, is the best film he has made in 10 years.

Though the pacing and execution of his evening performance seemed less precise than the earlier concert, the audience responded with the same enthusiasm.

Presley had come back to Los Angeles after 13 years. He had added an orchestra and some new songs, but he still had the excellent country-blues voice, the enormous personal charisma and showmanship.

He showed that he is still way in front of everybody else.